

# Finally, Felix breaks through

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
in London

America's Allyson Felix made it third time lucky to win the Olympic 200m crown here on Wednesday and deny Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce a sprint double.

Felix, a silver medalist at the 2004 and 2008 Games over the distance, powered to victory in 21.88 sec to thwart Fraser-Pryce's hopes of adding the 200m title to her newly acquired 100m crown.

"Finally, it has been a long time coming," a delighted Felix said. "I've waited so long for this moment and I am just overjoyed."

"There are so many people I love here tonight and I am just overjoyed to share it with them," the 26-year-old from Los Angeles added.

Fraser-Pryce took silver in 22.09 sec with Carmelita Jeter of the United States winning bronze in 22.14 sec.

Jamaica's Veronica Campbell-Brown — chasing a historic third consecutive Olympic 200m gold after pipping Felix at the two previous Games — was fourth in a time of 22.38 sec.

Felix looked smooth throughout, coming off the bend with a significant lead and holding her nerve in the home stretch to win a long-overdue first gold.

Felix is a three-time world champion over 200m but could only manage bronze at last year's World Championships in Daegu, South Korea.

But she came into the Olympics in top form having clocked the fastest time in the world this year, running 21.69 at the US Olympic trials.

America's Sanya Richards-Ross, aiming to complete a rare 200m-400m double in London after winning the 400m earlier in the Games, finished fifth in 22.39 sec.

Felix's victory is America's first gold in the event since 1992, when Gwen Torrence won in Barcelona and is a rare recent success in the battle against sprinting powerhouse Jamaica.



US gold medalist Allyson Felix reflects after winning the women's 200m final at London Olympics on Wednesday.

OLIVIER MORIN / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The United States, formerly the undisputed kings of sprinting, have been forced to watch as the Caribbean island of Jamaica has stolen its mantle.

The Jamaicans dominated in Beijing in 2008, winning all four individual sprint races and the men's 4x100m relay and Usain Bolt has already taken gold in the men's 100m in London.

## 110m hurdles

Meanwhile, Aries Merritt led a US one-two in the men's Olympic 110m hurdles on Wednesday as Cuba's defending champion Dayron Robles pulled up injured halfway through the race.

Merritt, the fastest hurdler in the world this season, clocked a personal best of 12.92sec, the second fastest time in Olympic history.

His time beat the 12.93sec that the American has run three times this year and the 12.94sec he timed in the semis.



DAVID J. PHILLIP / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia's Natalya Antyukh (right) crosses the finish line to win gold in the women's 400m hurdles on Wednesday.



ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

US' Aries Merritt lunges over the line to win the men's 110m hurdles final.

## Ex-retiree justifies decision with victory

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
in London

Japan's Hitomi Obara justified her decision to come out of retirement by winning the women's 48kg freestyle wrestling gold in her first Olympic Games at London's ExceL Arena on Wednesday.

Obara, who under her maiden name of Sakamoto won seven world titles in the non-Olympic 51kg class, defeated Azerbaijan's Mariya Stadnyk 3-1 in a repeat of last year's World Championship final in Istanbul.

Stadnyk won the opening period convincingly, but the 31-year-old Obara stormed back into the contest with several well-judged takedowns and, after her referee raised her arm to confirm her victory, dissolved in floods of tears.

Canada's Carol Huynh, the 2008 Beijing champion who lost to Obara in the semifinals, took an early lead in her bronze medal bout when, after the opening period ended scoreless, Senegal's Isabelle Sambou drew a blue ball — the color of Huynh's singlet.

That gave Huynh the right to mount the first leg-grab attack in the 30 seconds of extra-time and she duly scored.

The second two minute period also ended without any points and this time Huynh

drew a blue ball and again made the most of her good fortune to secure a bronze medal.

In the other bronze bout, Clarissa Chun of the United States produced a takedown with a couple of seconds remaining in the opening period to go 1-0 up against Irini Merleni of Ukraine, the inaugural 2004 Athens Games champion and Beijing bronze medalist.

Merleni attacked hard in the second period but Chun's hip-toss extended her lead and she took the bout 3-0.

Merleni was applauded off the mat by Ukraine sporting great and former Olympic pole vault champion Sergei Bubka.

Later on Wednesday, Japan's Kaori Icho won her third successive Olympic women's freestyle wrestling 63kg gold medal, defeating China's Jing Ruixue in the final at the ExceL Arena.

Her victory meant Icho remained the lone Olympic champion in an event which only made its debut at the 2004 Games in Athens.

Mongolia's Battsetseg Soronzonbold, the 2010 world champion at 59kg, defeated Canada's Martine Dugrenier, a three-time world champion in the non-Olympic 67kg class, for one of the two bronze medals.

Dugrenier lost to Icho in her opening bout of the Games.



PETR DAVID JOSEK / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brazil's Juliana Felisberta (left) and Larissa Franca react after defeating China's Zhang Xi and Xue Chen (right) in their women's bronze medal beach volleyball match on Wednesday.

## Chinese duo flops on the beach

By REUTERS  
in LONDON

Brazil's Juliana Felisberta and Larissa Franca staged a dazzling comeback to win bronze in the women's Olympic beach volleyball on Wednesday by beating China's Xue Chen and Zhang Xi after being within two points of losing.

Xue and Zhang looked unstoppable in the first set, which they won 21-11, and took an early lead in the second set. But Juliana and Larissa, the

reigning world champions, recovered their fighting spirit and drew level.

The second set was too close to call almost until it was over. Xue and Zhang led 19-17 but the Brazilians held their nerve, clawed their way back and clinched it 21-19.

The third set was also a close affair, with the Brazilians holding onto a narrow lead but the Chinese mounting powerful attacks until the end. The Brazilian pair finally nailed the set and the match 15-12.

Juliana and Larissa arrived in London as the favorites but

their dreams of gold unraveled when they were upset in the semifinals by Americans Jennifer Kessy and April Ross on Tuesday.

Xue and Zhang, bronze medalists in Beijing, had been expected to do better than in the last Games but they lost to the reigning champions, Americans Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh, in their semifinal.

May-Treanor and Walsh won gold in Athens in 2004 and again in Beijing. They are the only beach volleyball team, men's or women's, to win

Olympic gold twice.

The two American pairs meet in the gold medal match later on Wednesday.

Juliana and Larissa, who have been playing together since 2004, are six-time winners of the professional beach volleyball world tour. They also won last year's world championships.

The Brazilians were unable to play together at the Beijing Olympics in 2008 because Juliana was out with a knee injury. Larissa teamed up with Ana Paula and they came fifth.

## Hoops springs to life, at last

By PATRICK GRAHAM  
in London  
Reuters

France's Ronny Turiaf's flagrant foul in the fourth quarter of Wednesday's quarterfinal was bad, but a chorus of boos from a largely Spanish crowd was unlike anything the London Olympic basketball tournament had seen.

Organizers and MCs have worked hard to raise the temperature during a week of often uncompetitive games in the Olympic Park's temporary basketball arena, but for most pure basketball fans something has been missing.

Maybe it is the ballot system that awarded many Londoners tickets for what is a marginal sport in Britain just to go to the Games, but there are no chants of "De-fense", no noise when players are taking free throws and only the odd awestruck roar for a big dunk.

If not for the hotdogs, half-time kiss-cam and domination of the latest installment of a US Dream Team packed with National Basketball Association stars, one would say it was almost British.

But the switch to the 15,500 seat Greenwich Arena for the knockout stages may be just the tonic, helped by a competitive edge that saw two rough, foul-packed opening games on Wednesday go down to the wire.

"For sure it was a different game now we're in the quarterfinals," Spain's Sergio Rodriguez said after it pulled away from France in the final minute to make the semifinals.

"We played some great hard defense and so did France. We came off three games where we played really badly and really upped our game."

The first session on Wednesday was dominated by Spanish red and gold flags carried by some of the flood of young Spaniards who have fled to London from a country where half of those under 25 are out of work.

"It was like a little bit of Spain here today," said Luciana Rodriguez, a 29-year-old from Madrid, waiting in line for a burrito on the arena concourse. "We love basketball and I really hope this team has a chance of giving us something at the Olympics."

Initially used as the home of Olympic gymnastics, an army of 300 workers descended on the North Greenwich Arena the moment the last spectator left on Tuesday — tearing out gym apparatus, adding 2,000 extra seats and laying down a basketball court in just more than 18 working hours.

The change of venue was cited by some players as a factor in a low-scoring start to the quarterfinal round between Lithuania and Russia, where the percentage of successful shots was down on average and a third of free throws went astray.

"It's very complicated when you play in a different gym in such an important game. You saw that both teams in the first half couldn't really make a shot," said Russia's Andrei Kirilenko.

After cruising through the group stage, a powerhouse US side remain firm favorites to take gold, as well as the tournament's biggest draw by far.

Some of the team's biggest stars including LeBron James and James Harden strolled in to take a seat among the fans and check out the Brazil-Argentina before their game later on Wednesday.

"I follow the NBA quite a lot, so the chance to see all these guys up close is like a dream," said Simon, a 27-year-old who'd traveled down from Bradford in the north of England specially for the game.

"They are just huge."